

Men's Volleyball SIS

MEN'S VOLLEYBALL

Rules of the Game

Collegiate volleyball is an indoor team sport. Courts are divided into 29 ½ foot square halves, separated by a 39 inch net that is 7 feet 11 5/8 inches above the floor. Each team occupies one of the court halves, and players may not cross into the opponent's half. Penn State's men's volleyball team plays its home matches in Rec Hall.

Matches consist of a maximum of five games; to win a match, a team must win three games. The first team to score 25 points wins the game, but if a fifth game must be played, the first team to score 15 points wins the game and match. (Note: In all games, a team must be at least two points ahead of its opponent to win, so that if the score of a game is 24-24, then the winning team must score 26 points). A team scores a point when one of its players hits the ball over the net and the opposing team cannot return it, or returns or serves it out of bounds. A team may score a point regardless of whether one of its players is serving; this is referred to as "rally" scoring.

A team must have six players on court for all points. These players rotate positions on the court as points are scored; one player, the libero (defensive specialist), may remain in the defensive backcourt, and may (but is not required to) serve when it is his turn. Players may be substituted after each point. Players may hit/touch the ball with any part of their body. A team is allowed to hit the ball no more than three times before it goes over the net; blocking an opponent's shot does NOT count as a hit.

Penn State Men's Volleyball History

The Penn State men's volleyball team began varsity competition in 1977 under coach Tom Tait, who also was the first women's varsity volleyball coach. Tait guided the Nittany Lions to two Eastern Intercollegiate Volleyball Association (EIVA) titles, five national championship tournament appearances, and a national runner-up finish in 1982, and was named EIVA coach of the year four times. For these accomplishments, Tait is considered to be the "father of Penn State volleyball." In 2007, he was recognized by the U.S. Volleyball Association as an All-Time Great Coach. In 2012, he was an inaugural inductee in the EIVA Volleyball Hall of Fame.

Tom Peterson took over as coach in 1989, and the program continued its success, culminating in the 1994 NCAA men's volleyball national championship; that year, Peterson was recognized as national coach of the year. The Nittany Lions remain the only men's team east of the Mississippi River to win the national title; coincidentally, the women's volleyball team holds that same distinction. During Peterson's six-year tenure, Penn State appeared in five NCAA Tournaments.

Current coach Mark Pavlik played under Tom Tait, and succeeded Tom Peterson as head coach in 1995. Under Pavlik's guidance, the Nittany Lions continue to be a national power, earning national runner-up distinction in both 1995 and 2006, winning the national championship in 2008, and participating in 19 national championship tournaments in 21 seasons. The 2008 team was the first eastern team to earn a #1 national tournament seed, and Matt Anderson was conference, national, and national tournament MVP. Anderson was later a member of the 2012 and 2016 U.S. Olympic Teams. Before the 2016, Pavlik was presented with the Donald S. Shondell All-Time great Coach Award.

In 2017, Penn State volleyball alumnus Chris Cage was inducted into the EIVA Hall of Fame.

In 2018, the Nittany Lions finished with a 15-11 record (10-4 in the EIVA), and lost in the semi-final round of the Conference Tournament to Harvard, 3-2. Matt McLaren and Calvin Mende were named to the All-EIVA 1st Team, and Jalen Penrose won the Off the Block (OTB) National Server of the Year Award.

In 2016, Penn State again won the regular season EIVA title, and then shut out both Princeton and St. Francis in the Conference Championship Tournament. The Lions then lost 3-2 to Hawaii in the opening match of the NCAA Tournament. Overall, Penn State finished the season with a 21-11 record (13-3 in the EIVA). Chris Nugent and Calvin Mende were named All-EIVA 1st Team, and both earned All-America honors as well. Penn State volleyball alumnus Chris Cage was inducted into the EIVA Hall of Fame.

In 2019, Penn State finished with a 15-15 record, 10-4 in the EIVA (3rd place) during the regular season. In the EIVA Tournament final, the Lions lost in 5 sets to regular season champion Princeton.) Jason Donorovich was a 1st All-EIVA selection, and Henrik Falck Lauten was named EIVA Newcome of the Year.

The Big 10 does not support men's volleyball at the varsity level, and so Penn State competes in the EIVA. The Nittany Lions have dominated the EIVA since its inception, winning 32 out of 35 Conference championships. They have been regular NCAA Tournament participants, appearing 32 times since 1981. As further evidence of Penn State's EIVA dominance, the EIVA Most Valuable Player Award, inaugurated in 1997, has gone to a Nittany Lion 18 times.

In 2014, the NCAA instituted a new format whereby a pool of 6 teams is selected: three Division 1 conference champions, as well as 3 "at-large" teams. The top 2 seeded teams are automatically qualified for the National Championship Tournament, and the 2 winners of "play-in" games advance to the Tournament as well.

Five Nittany Lions participated in the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Matt Anderson, Max Holt, and Aaron Russell were on the U.S. team (which won the bronze medal), Carlos Guerra was on the Mexican team, and Ivan Contreras was an assistant coach for the Mexican team.

Team Accomplishments

Coaches

NCAA Tournament Appearances

.1981-1983, 1986, 1987, 1989, 1991-1997, 1999-2015, 2017

National Champions

.1994, 2008

National Runner-Up

.1982, 1995, 2006, 2010

EIVA Champions

.1986, 1987, 1989, 1991-1997, 1999-2015, 2017

Notable Players

Ivan Contreras (1994-1997)

1997 AVCA, EIVA Player of the Year
1995-1997 1st Team All-American
4-time 1st Team All-EIVA
1996, 1997 CoSIDA Academic All-American
3-time GTE Academic All-American
2013 EIVA Hall of Fame Inductee

Jose Quinones (1999-2002)

2001, 2002 1st Team All-American
3 time EIVA Player of the Year
1999 EIVA Newcomer of the Year
4-time 1st Team All-EIVA

Matt Anderson (2006-2008)

2008, 2009 1st Team All-American, AVCA Co-Player of the Year

2007, 2008 All-EIVA 1st Team

2008 EIVA Player of the Year

Max Holt (2006-2009)

2008, 2009 1st Team All-American

2006-2009 1st Team All-EIVA

2009 EIVA Player of the Year

Aaron Russell (2012-2015)

3-time EIVA Player of the Year
4-time 1st Team All-EIVA
2013, 2015 EIVA Championship Tournament MVP
2-time 1st Team All-American
2015 Karch Kiraly Award

Tom Tait (1977-1988) 355-88-9

5 NCAA Tournament appearances
1986, 1987 EIVA Champion
1976, 1979, 1981, 1982 EIVA Coach of the Year
Coach, PSU Women's Volleyball 1976-1978
2007 USA Volleyball All-Time great Coach
2013 Inaugural EIVA Hall of Fame inductee

Tom Peterson (1989-1994) 128-50

1994 NCAA National Champion
5 NCAA Tournament appearances
5 EIVA Championships
1994 AVCA, EIVA Coach of the Year

Mark Pavlik (1995-present) 571-199 (.741)

21 NCAA Tournament appearances
2008 National Champ, 2-time runner-up
21 EIVA Championships
7-time EIVA Coach of the Year
2008 AVCA National Coach of the Year
2015 Donald S. Shondell All-Time Great Coach Award

Player Recognition

AVCA Player of the Year-- Ivan Contreras (1997); Matt Anderson (co-winner 2008)

ASICS/Volleyball Magazine Libero of the Year – Ricky Mattei (2001).

NCAA Tournament Most Outstanding Player – Ramon Hernandez (1994); Matt Anderson (2008)

Karch Kiraly Award – Aaron Russell (2015)

Off the Block (OTB) National Server of the Year – Jalen Penrose (2018).

1st Team All-America – 28 selections, including multi-year honorees Chris Chase (1986, 1987, 1988), Javier Gaspar (1987, 1988), Ivan Contreras (1995, 1996, 1997), and Jose Quinones (2001, 2002), Max Holt (2008, 2009), and Max Lipsitz (2009, 2010); Aaron Russell (2014, 2015).

EIVA Most Valuable Player – Ivan Contreras (1997); Tony Mazzullo (1998); Sergio Pompena (1999); Jose Quinones (2000, 2001, 2002); Carlos Guerra (2003); Keith Kowal (2004); Matt Proper (2005); Matt Anderson (2008), Max Holt (2009), Max Lipsitz (2010), Joe Sunder (2011, 2012), Aaron Russell (co-winner, 2013, 2014, 2015), Chris Nugent (2016).

EIVA Newcomer of the Year – Jose Quinones (1999); Zeljko Koljesar (2000); Alex Gutor (2004); Dennis Del Valle (2008), Edgardo Goas (2009), Taylor Hammond (2013), Royce Clemons (2016), Henrik Falck Lauten (2019)

1st Team All-East/All-EIVA - 160 selections since 1972

Olympians (since 2012) – Matt Anderson (2012, 2016, United States); Carlos Guerra (2016, Mexico); Ivan Contreras (2016, Mexico [Assistant coach]); Max Holt (2016, United States); Aaron Russell (2016, United States).

EIVA Hall of Fame – Tom Tait (2012); Ivan Contreras (2013); Ramon Hernandez (2014); Javier Gaspar (2015); Chris Chase (2017).